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THE BAD ATTITUDE: PLAYERS WHO DO NOT TRY

by

Steven Kearby

B.Ed., Western Washington State College, 1970

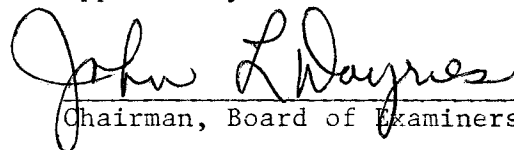
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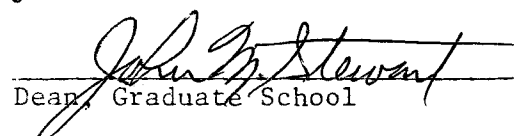
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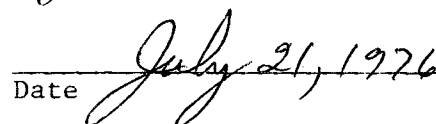
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Date July 21, 1976

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Kearby, Steven F., M.S., August, 1976

Health, Physical Education
and Recreation

The Bad Attitude: Players Who Do Not Try (73 pp.)

Director: John L. Dayries



In the athletic community, the term "bad attitude" is frequently used as a matter of course to characterize some members of teams. The stated purpose of this study is to explore the ways in which the "bad attitude" is used by nine baseball coaches to explain the relationships between themselves and their players. This study will seek to sort out, from the recounted experiences of these coaches, the different uses of the term "bad attitude"; the circumstances associated with bad attitudes; and the methods coaches use to manage bad attitudes. From the coaches' talk one can generate the different properties of bad attitudes and the way certain kinds of behavior are related to specific kinds of attitudes.

An overriding purpose of this work, however, is to generate theories about the nature of sport because it is apparent that there is a need for the conversion of hardcore research data to theory (called Grounded Theory by Glaser and Strauss). This so-called qualitative methodology enables one to obtain data in a natural and sincere manner from the informant coaches. The interviews with the coaches are deliberately unstructured (although the interviews do necessarily revolve around certain questions).

The data indicates that the bad attitude is a manifestation of deliberate withholding of performance ability--not trying. It follows that coaches seem to classify their players who have bad attitudes as: (a) the alibier; (b) the benchwarmer, (c) the uncoachable player, (d) the selfish player, (e) the immature player, (f) the loafer, and (g) the faker.

The coaches typically use the glossy language of sport in an effort to describe the bad attitude and eventually label and place a player into a category. These glossy terms are called Performance Summarizers. Examples focus on: (a) the circumstances that coaches are aware of to explain the performance of their team, and (b) the personality traits of individual players.

When a bad attitude is exhibited by a player, the coaches point to three procedures that are useful in managing that attitude: (a) communication with the player, (b) an analysis of the player's attitude, and (c) sanctioning the player by dismissing him from the team.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my thanks to Alexandra for her patience and expert editing.

A special thanks goes to John Dayries for his prolonged encouragement and to Jon Driessen for his help in "conquering" sociological language. Also, I would like to express my appreciation to Dr. Gary Nygaard for serving on the committee.

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Chapter 1

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

Introduction

Americans place a high value on trying. An obvious fact about American life is the emphasis on trying in a variety of contexts. For instance, Americans may try to do well in school, or some may try to solve a marital problem, while others may compete in the business world by trying to make a living, and yet others may try doing their best in sports. This is manifested most clearly in the world of competitive athletics, and nowhere in America is the notion of trying more noticeable or obvious than in athletics and sport.

In America a great deal of emphasis is placed on maintaining a good attitude and it often is most apparent in an athletic setting. This statement, I believe, links this study with the belief that athletics is essentially social and comparative to other institutional contexts.

This particular study of the "bad attitude" results from an original piece of work which involved sitting in the dugout of the baseball team at a university from a western state during games and practice sessions and listening to the talk that baseball players and coaches used. This particular team frequently used a phrase, "bad attitude." Occasionally, players used the term to describe teammates or players of opposing teams, but generally, it was a matter of course that the coach also used the term in characterizing members of his team. Other baseball coaches from opposing teams were also overheard using the phrase

"bad attitude" in a variety of ways. The reoccurring use of this term lead to this particular work; a study of bad attitudes.

In selecting what may be termed an operational definition of the "bad attitude," let it suffice to say that it will be used in the same way in which the coaches have used it. Certainly, in this study a major task is to explore (through the coaches' talk) the way a "bad attitude is used in a particular context for a variety of purposes.

This study will seek to sort out, from the baseball coaches' points of view, the different uses of bad attitudes, the circumstances associated with bad attitudes, and the methods used by coaches to manage players with bad attitudes. From the coaches' talk one can generate the different properties of bad attitudes and the way certain kinds of behavior are related to specific kinds of attitudes. It is also possible to describe the varied problems that coaches encounter as they deal with many kinds of players exhibiting different kinds of bad attitudes.

Procedures Used in the Study

The nine head coaches who participated in the interviews represented a cross-section of coaching experience, age, and success in terms of win-loss records. The numbers in parentheses correspond with the accounts of the coaches' experiences in the text of the study itself. The number ten (10) will be used when it is appropriate to interject my own field observation experiences to clarify important statements in the text.

Larry Looper (1), who coached at a small rural high school, was in his third year as the head baseball coach and had not had a winning season.

Leo "The Lip" Hoffman (2) was in his sixth year of head coaching at a large rural high school and in his fifteenth year of coaching. His teams invariably won the league championship and did very well in state competition. They won two state championships in six years.

Four metropolitan high school coaches were interviewed: Jock Rambler (3) was an elderly coach who complained about his arthritis almost daily. His teams were well coached, but in his thirteen years as a head coach they had always failed to win "the big one." He had coached a number of players who had gone into professional baseball.

Jackie Funn (4) was an immensely successful coach in terms of winning big games. His teams had won city championships wherever he had coached and he prided himself in "out coaching" his managerial opponent. He had been a minor league player who played long after his career should have been over because he just "didn't make any stupid plays." His pet saying to umpires, whom he loved to berate, was, "Why don't you go home and beat your wife?"

Elwood Strumpf (5) was an ex-major league pitcher who appeared to be very relaxed around his players and believed that baseball was supposed to be fun. His teams were usually of mediocre talent and lost about as many games as they won. His school was one of the smallest in the city and their home field looked as if it had never been manicured.

"Pee Wee" Crockett (6) taught at a very large suburban high school and had worked for five years as head baseball coach. During those five years his win-loss record had steadily improved and his teams had won two league championships.

Three college coaches were interviewed: "Shorty" Miles (7) was a former minor league player in the San Francisco Giant organization

who coached both basketball and baseball at a small, technical college in a western state. The school offered no baseball scholarships; consequently, his team was made up of players who played for the pure enjoyment of the game. The first three years "Shorty" coached, the team's record was twelve wins and sixty-six losses.

Leroy Love (8) was the coach at a large, metropolitan university in a western state. During the interview, he appeared to be very solemn and serious in his approach to the game. He said that his practices were run on a strict time basis and, in fact, so was this interview. He only allowed one hour for the session and he constantly seemed ill at ease discussing players with bad attitudes.

"Bum" Smelway (9) was a young, bald-headed coach in his second year at an average-sized university in a western state. He had pitched for the university team before taking over as head coach. His record for the two years that he coached was ten wins and forty-five losses.

While working as an assistant varsity coach at a university in a western state and as a baseball umpire in two western states, I had the opportunity to view these coaches and their teams at various times during their seasons. All coaches agreed to a tape-recorded interview when asked if they would talk about "attitudes" of their players. The interviews were unstructured. Of course, there were certain questions that the interviews necessarily revolved around. (See Appendix) It was not assumed that the questions were proper until they were tested on the coaches. While interviewing, questions usually were reformulated according to the coach's experiences. The coaches understood that the hour-long interviews were to be confidential.

Each interview was transcribed verbatim for use in developing the initial scheme of classification. When transcribed the interviews averaged eighteen pages, double spaced. From the beginning of the data collection, a search was begun for properties of bad attitudes and how these properties were interpreted by the informant coaches. These properties were reported in the form of reappearing topics that were the recounted experiences of the coaches and were categorized as an initial step. It seemed important to take the role of the informant coach to become familiar and sensitive to his experiences. The categories of bad attitude, for example, the benchwarmer and the alibier, were underlined in the transcript. The remainder of the transcript was analyzed for further references to these categories. The references were then removed from the transcript and stapled together. After examining all the talk about a particular category, other categories were developed in order to classify all of the coaches' talk. When the main classifications and subsequent sub-classifications were organized to account for all of a coach's talk, it was necessary to summarize the varieties of thought and action of the coach. After exhausting all of the talk about a particular bad attitude, the transcript was read again until other bad attitudes were also isolated from the coach's talk.

Subsequent transcripts were compared for similar topics relating to the bad attitude and analyzed for new ones. It was important to refine continually the classification of the characteristics of bad attitude into more specific classifications (a difficult task when there was as much information as the transcripts yielded). A consistent classification scheme emerged when a further search of additional narrative failed to uncover any new bad attitudes. Of course, different kinds

of classification schemes were compared that forced the use of a new classification system, the final one. Glaser and Strauss (1967) said that in order for an analyst to "master his data, he is forced to engage in reduction of terminology."

Reducing the terminology helped formulate not only the classification scheme but also added in reaching the point where the theories and the concepts of the bad attitude explained the relationships between the coach and his player(s) with bad attitudes.

Theoretical and Procedural Elaboration

In the introduction, it was stated that a major task of this work was to explore the ways in which the term "bad attitude" was used for a variety of purposes so that new concepts which would help point to and describe the relationships between baseball coaches and their bad attitude players would be seen in the data. To do this, it was necessary to develop what Blumer (1962) called "definitive and sensitizing concepts." These concepts (or characteristics of the bad attitude) were built by isolating terms used by the coaches in their normal jargon or language. The characteristics came to be the ways coaches typify what is or has been their experience.

Kenyon and Loy (1962) contend that if sociology is the study of social order--the underlying regularity of human social behavior--including efforts to attain it and departures from it, then the sociology of sport becomes the study of the regularity and departures of human social behavior in a sports contest. Horkheimer (1963), a German sociologist, has said:

The more light that is thrown on the functions and possibilities of life in a sporting community, the more necessary it will become to make sport the subject of very serious theoretical and empirical studies, a subject for scientific research.

Athletics is a social phenomenon. Theory, by definition from Webster (1966) is a "scientifically accepted general principle offered to explain phenomena." Based on the premise that there is a definite need for more research aimed at the generation of theory in sport, it is apparent that more should be said for the conversion of hardcore research data to theory (called Grounded Theory) (1967).

To my knowledge the use of grounded theory has not been attempted by sports sociologists. The study of sports sociology has been limited, at this point, to theory generated from a priori assumptions. Glaser and Strauss (1967) point out that theory in sociology should:

- 1) Enable prediction and explanation of behavior,
- 2) Be useful in theoretical advance in sociology,
- 3) Be usable in practical applications--prediction and explanation should be able to give the practitioner understanding and control of situations,
- 4) Provide a perspective on behavior--a stance to be taken toward data,
- 5) Guide and provide a style for research on particular areas of behavior.

Using a qualitative methodology such as grounded theory enables one to use his data as a media; a rich and full way for theorizing and describing social roles, structures, and systems. In addition, Glaser and Strauss (1962) say "qualitative method still was the only way to obtain data on many areas of social life not amenable to the techniques for collecting quantitative data." And Merton (1957) noting the literature on scientific methods, remarks that

this literature is concerned with....ways in which scientists ought to think, feel, and act. It does not necessarily describe, in needed detail, the ways in which scientists actually do think, feel, and act.

Qualitative methodology (called ethnomethodology by Garfinkel) (1967) and Burns and Driessen (1970) enables the researcher to discover how the subject does think, feel, and act. It should be noted that the most significant parts of the quotes used in this work are underlined for easier identification of pertinent data. This makes it apparent that the talk is grounded to the talk of the informant.

It is essential to realize that this study is exploratory and that the bad attitudes described in this study are described as they were perceived by the informant coaches.

Finally, it is essential to link the notion of "not trying" to the bad attitude. Failure, in our society, is intentionally not trying. The bad attitude then becomes a label that allows coaches and players to engage in certain kinds of ostracism and punishments to handle the ideology of not trying. The term "bad attitude" also becomes a way of explaining something that is usually inexplicable and wispy. It is elusive; and, consequently, many theories and concerns are generated about it.

Chapter 2

TYPES AND PROPERTIES OF BAD ATTITUDES

Introduction

The kinds of bad attitudes discussed by the coaches in this chapter generally fell within the broad concern of the coaches' authority, as they expressed it. The term bad attitude frequently surfaced when coaches characterized players as the alibier, the benchwarmer, the uncoachable player, the selfish player, the immature player, the faker, and the loafer. All of these characters will be discussed as they were pointed to in the talk by the coaches. They were all essentially the same type of character in that they represented a threat to the success of the team--and success was what the coaches were charged with obtaining.

There are some considerations about the types of bad attitudes that should be mentioned. Some of the bad attitude types are not fully related to each other. The seven individual types of bad attitudes reported by the coaches are related in that they are all considered to be bad attitudes by the coaches themselves. That is to say, they are like seven different kinds of birds; all birds, but yet they are characteristically different.

The Alibier

According to one coach the "alibier"

has excuses for everything that he does wrong. . .I expect our ball players not to have any excuses. I think if we eliminate excuses, we create learning situations. And I think if you have excuses, then I think you put up a barrier against learning. I feel the same way as a coach; I try, if we lose, to try to find out why we lost, but I try and not have any excuses as to why we lost. (8).

Later during the interview the same coach alluded to the alibier again.

I'm saying that an individual who has always got an excuse for something is going to get in a tough situation and then he's not going to feel responsible for what happened. He's going to have a ready made excuse why this didn't happen and I think this is the biggest barrier to learning. If you find excuses why you didn't catch the ball, or why you didn't throw the ball right or why you didn't hit it, you're going to say I didn't do it and the reason I didn't do it was because it was too hot or it was too cold or the sun was in my eyes or the umpire gave me a bad deal. (8).

Another coach equated "losing your temper or control, and making excuses as part of a deterioration of team morale." (2).

One very successful (in terms of win-loss record and high team morale) high school coach had this to say about alibiers:

He relies on someone else. 'I don't know.' This sort of thing. He's a hedger. He uses this as an alibi. (4).

As the interview progressed he talked about the mistakes that precede alibies:

The bad attitude always, invariably, it never fails. The bad attitude athlete makes the big mistake where it counts. (4).

The above statement deserves comment. In the game of baseball, as it is competitively played, there are outside (meaning something else besides the pressures of the game itself) pressures to perform well. These outside pressures may cause the player to alibi when he does poorly. As spoken about by the coaches the causes for alibiing are parental pressures, the making of excuses, losing some games, and going into a slump.

Parental Pressure

According to the coaches, parental pressure comes in a variety of forms:

The kids that are out--there are just three or four that I can think of right now--the kid that's out for a sport is out because

of parental pushiness. . .he's out there but not because he really wants to. In other words, he's just out there because he's gotta be. (6).

The pushy parent has not been written about in sport sociology, but this coach recognized the consequences when he said:

bad attitudes often times start with the parents when their ego is involved. The kids are an extension of their parents' ego and if their kid is not playing, they follow this sort of line of reasoning as I see it. They won't come out and say, "My kid should be playing," but they will point out several areas where they think my reasoning is faulty. They'll say "He should have done this," (second guessing you). "He should have done this," picking out the places that are obvious where you have made a mistake or where whatever you've tried, your strategy hasn't worked. And then they stop the one step short and they say, "Therefore, he's also wrong in his thinking because he should be playing my kid." Doesn't that make sense? . . .Then this dissatisfaction is transferred back to the kid. Really under the guise of wanting to help--helping the kid, in the best interest of the kid, it's the parents ego that's really being hurt. And the kid might be completely satisfied. (4).

It is a common feeling among parents to believe in their children and to want to help them.

Below are a few more examples of parents' attitudes towards their athlete-son that precipitated problems for the informant coaches.

We had some attitude situations, that I thought were bad attitudes. They weren't with their kids but with the parents. We had people volunteering their services to the boys on the weekends to take them out and teach them how to hit, and things like that. They get plenty of coaching at school. In some cases the parents were telling the kids the wrong way. We got them on the phone and told them to stop. Another area I think contributes to a bad attitude is the situation at home. (6).

It appeared to the coaches that parents who care too much about their sons can harm their "attitude" as much as those who don't care enough. Below is a final example:

Well, the parental attitude was that the kids could do no wrong; the attitude toward the other ball players was not the way I wanted it. Their physical ability was great, fantastic physical ability but the mental attitude and getting along with other ball players caused some

problems. And their working to get better left something to be desired as I said earlier. These are some of the attitudes that caused me some problems. (5).

Just as there are some parents who are overly concerned with their son's baseball playing success, there are also parents who don't care at all about how their sons do while playing. Consequently, some players just "go through the motions" of playing baseball.

Bad attitude, maybe a kid, I guess maybe I'm blaming the parents now. If a kid really excels in something and his parents really don't give a damn, whether he excels or not, then he gets to the high school level or a higher level and he says I don't really care about it any more. (2).

Making Excuses

Another reason for a player alibiing about his performance on the field is a seeming preoccupation with giving an excuse. The player may be so preoccupied with having an excuse ready that it creates a mental block and affects his play.

According to one coach a player will make excuses for himself because "he may be turned off on the sport due to previous experiences that he might have had, and he may be frustrated. (5).

One coach pointed out about the criticism that usually precedes the alibi:

Criticism is not personal, it is constructive. Then the alibiier shuts off all progress because he's not willing to accept the criticism. He doesn't listen to you--he's preoccupied with giving an excuse and then when you explain to him what should be done and how he should have done it, he's not receptive to it because he's got a defense mechanism; a wall built up. He can't accept it, he just stays at the same place. He just doesn't progress, no doubt. (2).

Some examples of alibis that the coaches frequently heard were:

"The coach does not like me". . .the kids came around and said well that this guy had already been talking about the fact that he was never given the chance to play. He accepted this as his goal to have me get ticked off at him and boot him off the team. (5).

Another coach heard the "I didn't know about practice" excuse when the player missed practice, or was late to practice. The coach indicated that "being absent or even late to practice without a valid excuse is a good signal that a player has a bad attitude." (9).

Finally, a college coach commented,

Another thing is, he's (the alibier) going to have, I believe, a premade excuse. In other words, he has questioned whether he's going to be able to do it. If he doesn't do it, it's not going to be his fault, it's going to be someone else's fault. For example, in baseball, it may be too hot. It may be too cold. The field may be wet. The pitcher's mound may be too high. The batter's box may be too dusty. The umpire may have made a bad call. All of these things, in the individual I consider a poor attitude and set up for a reason so he won't do it. (8).

Losing Games

Another major cause for a player alibiing was that the team was losing more games than it was winning.

It was oftentimes spoken to by the coaches that losing games was a large contributor to the player alibiing. One coach pointed out that, "a team can win, too, if it has a bunch of guys that have a lousy attitude, but other people won't recognize it as much as they would if the team were losing." (4). The implication is clear: losing amplifies problems of attitude. Another coach put it a slightly different way:

A lot of the times the score of the game makes a lot of difference. I've lost a few ball games when the score was 25 to 1, and the kids have pretty bad attitudes; and sometimes we've had a pretty close ball game, and the kids have a pretty good attitude. It's just a matter of the score. (1).

The emphasis on winning appeared very clearly as the coaches continued with the interviews. An informant coach explained:

It's a hell of a lot easier to develop bad attitudes or to have a kid with a bad attitude when you get thumped all the time. I think you'll find far more bad attitudes when you're losing quite a bit. Losing dictates a hell of a lot of things. Really! I think

the kids are more apt to question your ability as a coach and question the different types of things that you do and you teach when they're losing. If they are winning they are not as critical as they could be. It's a hell of a lot nicer to have the problem when you're winning than when you're losing. (4).

A coach was asked the question about which comes first "bad attitude" or the "losing of the game?"

But I think that it's (attitude) one of those intangible things that are in there that do make the difference between winning or losing. Do you understand? (9).

Most of the coaches referred to alibiing by a player as a result of a lack of team success. Only three coaches mentioned that a lack of personal success may have something to do with having a bad attitude. The lack of personal success in baseball is called a "slump".

The Slump

The "slump" was referred to by the coaches as dissatisfaction by the players with their own performances. One coach said, "He might be down a little bit, attitude-wise, because of a slump or because of personal problems." (7).

Another informant discussed how a slump can affect even good attitude players in a negative way:

I've seen good ballplayers, good athletes that were starters and played all the time do this (exhibit a bad attitude). Generally it occurs when things aren't going good, whether it's not going good for them or not going good for the team, or in a situation where a negative situation exists. I think a lot of times bad attitudes or morale tendencies turn up when things aren't going good, when success is lacking. (3).

Certainly, slumps can be frustrating and this same coach seemed to understand what the player was going through.

Dissatisfaction comes from lack of success. If we had some problem--if you're asking what I would do? As long as the kids understand that they are only expected to achieve to their capabilities--why there is no morale problem. . .dissatisfaction occurs from frustration, I think. (9).

As anyone who has played baseball knows, the pressures of a slump are terrible. According to another coach, he recognized the pressure and tried to help.

I think in many cases it is just plain maturity. The other thing that would probably relate to this is self-concept. They don't see themselves as having any value, any particular value. Sometimes in reinforcing that you actually reverse the situation that actually was intended and you turn it into a negative attitude. I think that the problem is like a classroom, you have so many different personalities to deal with, and you're not going to deal with them right one-hundred percent of the time. (4).

In pointing to the many faces of the alibi, the coaches saw him early in their diagnosis of potential bad attitude players because he always had an excuse for his failures. It should be pointed out, also, that these excuses (parents, slumps, and losing) were valid reasons for his shortcomings. However, the fact that the player himself used these excuses, blamed others, and was not willing to accept criticism (even when it may have been positive) was an indication, according to the coaches, that he had a bad attitude. He also had a tendency to make a mistake at the most critical part of the game because he had not prepared himself properly. The player knew if he made a mistake he could project the blame elsewhere.

The idea of blaming others for failure is not limited to those players who play in the game itself. Those members who sit on the bench (in baseball jargon, it is called "riding the pine" or "benchwarming") have the occasion to speak negatively about the strategies coaches use, and the play of other players (particularly if the players who are playing are younger than the benchwarmers).

The Benchwarmer

A coach explained his feeling about the benchwarmer:

I have to relate a bad attitude in high school clear back to Little League. Everyone gets to play down there--so when I get him in high school and he sits on the bench--all they do is bad-mouth me or quit the team. (3).

One coach was emphatic about the origin of bad attitudes on his teams: "Yes, it obviously starts on the bench." (5).

Another coach said this about being on the bench:

But I think this is where your attitude, your bad attitude, really can develop. It is where you get these three or four kids that aren't playing and they start chipping away. And if they're influential enough and vocal enough, they can infest the whole ball club. (3).

He went on to say,

a kid sitting on the bench. . .there's three of them sitting there and they haven't played for a week and pretty soon they start talking, they start chipping away about what the coach is doing because that's all they have to do, is sit there. (3).

Another informant coach said:

I think that you have more problems with the player that isn't playing--that's an upper-classman, and the senior or upper-classman's attitude may be bad because he's not getting to play. (2).

He went on to say,

I realize that sitting on the bench and not playing has an effect on an attitude--bad or good, but mostly bad. But there are always things that players on the bench can do to contribute to the team. (2).

For example a player can chart pitches, steal signs, or encourage other players to make a contribution to the team.

Another coach said that parents have an influence on the benchwarmer.

I also think that the bad attitude starts off a lot in the home because the parents like to see their kids playing, and if the kid is sitting out on the bench a lot, they don't get to see their kids playing, and the kid quits. I think that a coach is under responsibility to get to know each and every one of his kids to his level best, and I think I've tried to do that. This way you can try and visualize what the kids are thinking that are sitting on the bench. And you know that they're definitely hurt by not playing. This hurts a ball club too. The kids on the field aren't getting the support of the kids on the bench. So in a ball game, nine kids are happy, and five kids aren't happy. (6).

The player with such a bad attitude is generally thought of as being unhappy.

One coach said this about what can transpire on the bench, particularly when he is not around to hear:

A person who is, for example, not quite good enough to make the team, but if he worked at it might make the team. But another individual, telling him "you ought to be playing" or "this other guy shouldn't be playing," usually this type of individual will drag some other people with him. And usually it will take more than one individual to do this. If you've got one, then all of a sudden you've got two, and I think this is a problem that develops, as far as breaking down team morale. (3).

Another coach admitted that some players who are sitting on the bench can affect team morale.

There are some guys that think that they're pretty tough, and they sit on the bench--each individual has his own personal problems that fit in with his personality--and it can lead to bad attitudes--when an upper-classman recognizes that a younger guy is better than he is, that he deserves to play. (6).

The coaches gave the impression that bad attitudes generally start on the bench from those players who aren't playing. The benchwarmer, who had a bad attitude, is generally non-supportive of the other playing members of the team. It has been pointed out that he can cause a downfall of team morale by questioning the coach's choice of first string players.

Another coach said,

It's mostly seniors that I have the problems with, that have bad attitudes simply because there's a sophomore or junior, or some under-classman that you've got in his position, and you feel, as the coach, that he'd do a better job (the under-classman). (1).

Another coach felt that the size of the squad (meaning the number on the bench) was a determinant in the development of a bad attitude.

The size of the squad, I think, really affects the attitudes if you keep the squad size down to about 13 boys where you've got your pitchers playing in the outfield when they're not pitching. The most individuals you might have on a bench at one time is maybe

three or four. But yet they're always going to get a chance to play every ball game. I have found that you don't have the rebellious type individual. I mean, everything just goes smoothly. I think a lot of bad attitudes start happening when you have more than 13 players on your squad. (5).

The dissension factor, alluded to above, is discussed by a coach who no longer coaches large teams. He preferred to keep his squad small. He discussed his reasoning:

I believed in having two kids at every position, so that a junior was pushing a senior. And I finally realized about two thirds through the season, that here you are, ding dong, you've got nine kids starting, you've got nine pretty good ball players sitting on the bench. And I found out that there was starting to be that chipping and a little bit of dissension. They were just sitting on their butts. You know, in a close ball game, they sat for seven innings or two hours in Oregon, and it's cold out there, and you're sitting on your butt, and the kids wonder what am I doing here? (2).

When asked if a bad attitude almost always began on the bench, the same informant said:

Yes, I think so. Since they passed the new rule, about four or five years, ago, where the coach can coach third base. So the coach goes off and coaches third base, okay, well the coach is out of the way, the kids who are riding the bench, well now they can be a little more vocal. They can say, "Well, why aren't I playing?" And then go up to one of the starters, and say they're "better than the kids playing out in left field, how come I'm not starting?" The coach has favorites. And things like this just manifest. But when the coach starts to leave the bench, if there's two or three kids dissatisfied, well now's the chance to start, to start to do some digging. It will be a real dedicated individual to the program, to turn round and tell their friends to shut up and pay attention to what's going on. (2).

While I was engaged in field observations my experiences would tend to verify the coaches' accounts of their experiences. Many bad attitudes do begin on the bench when a benchwarmer "gripes" about the way things are going. It has also been my experience to hear griping by players who are playing in the game, too. Griping is not exclusive to one group or the other. (10).

The griper is the fellow who complains particularly when things go wrong. A high school coach said, "A kid who always gripes, seems to me to have a bad attitude." (2).

Another college coach talked about the griper in this way:

He gets on other people. . .for example, let's say: the player we're talking about is an infielder and the pitcher's not throwing strikes or he's having a bad day and they're getting a lot of hits off him or something like that, well then this individual will tend to holler something like "Get the ball over the plate!" or "Let's get another pitcher in here!" Instead of worrying about his playing and doing the best that he can, he tends to knock the other individual or blame the other individual for what is happening instead of just doing the best job he can, and letting the other individual take care of himself or letting the coach handle the situation. (8).

Another coach pointed to griping when giving this account of his experiences:

The morale of the ball club can be affected by an individual that has a poor attitude, so you have to try and channel that in to a more positive manner. You may have to because maybe he thinks that he's not getting to play as much as he should be, and because of that, comments about the way the team is being run by the coach, the way that the players that are getting to play contribute to the success of the team. He may pounce on their mistakes as an example of why he should be playing, and thereby, in an overall manner, contribute to the downfall of the team. (4).

The benchwarmer who gripes, according to the coaches, can be very damaging to the morale of the team. As one coach pointed out, "He (the griper) tends to influence the marginal player--the player who's attitude is neither good nor bad." (7).

The coaches felt that the benchwarmer could cause the coach to spend more time counseling than coaching. The feelings from the previous statements were that if the benchwarmer wanted to, he could make a positive contribution to the team by encouraging the other players--generally helping out whenever necessary. Perhaps just the demonstration of a positive attitude toward the coach, players, and the entire program was

enough of a contribution towards making the team a success. Needless to say, the coaches seemed to feel that the benchwarmer was a major problem for them. They were quite clear, however, with respect to the fact that as a member of the team the benchwarmer had a responsibility to be ready to play in whatever capacity the coach desired.

The fact that players may have a tendency to give the coach a negative impression from the field as well as on the bench needs to be dealt with. A college coach said a bad attitude was formed by "a negative impression that the player gives while performing on the field--also on the bench." (8). Another coach pointed out that the athlete who was negative was normally negative towards the coach or had a negative attitude towards receiving any coaching. A good example of the negative attitude was described by one coach.

Well, I think the biggest one, the biggest one to me, in sense of a bad attitude on the playing field, is the tendency of an individual or ball player to get down on himself or other members of the team because things don't go right. And this is reflected in an individual that may be having a bad day or someone else on the team may be having a bad day or maybe the whole team is having a bad day. Instead of just hanging in there and doing the best you can and hustling and patting someone on the fanny, why this individual drops his head, gets on the other players, and second guesses. This is an obvious bad attitude. (4).

Another coach said:

If you talk about a kid with a bad attitude, he's negative. . . We had this year a few seniors. . . and they were doing a lot of badmouthing and stuff that I didn't like, and they knew it. And there were a few players, and fathers, and coaches that were watching that were very critical about what has happening and such. I simply told them that they don't know from one week to the next who was going to be in the ball game. And as long as they continued to bad-mouth the player that was in there, and not rooting for the people we were playing and not looking at the team instead of themselves, that they were never going to play again. (3).

This type of statement is certainly one indication of the notion found to be true throughout the interviewing process and subsequent

examination of the data, namely, the coach perceives that the player must change his behavior, feelings, and attitude. If the player cannot or does not want to change, the label "uncoachable" may be thrust on him (labeling by coaches will be discussed more in Chapter 3). (10).

The Uncoachable Player

According to a college coach, if one thinks of himself as a teacher, then a negative player creates a barrier against learning what the teacher feels needs to be learned.

I think it is negative in the aspect that the individual or the player that we're talking about doesn't feel these things are important. A lot of times an individual may be able to change the coach's ideas on certain things. But if it includes being late to practice, if it includes fundamentals, if it includes strategy, and those types of things, then I think this reflects back to an individual attitude and is negative, towards a learning situation. (4).

The same coach stated that the result of keeping the uncoachable player on the team is a break down of morale.

I think that the individual who is always talking negative about himself or the coaches, or the other players or just a general negative attitude tends to break down the morale of the individual who has a good attitude, so to speak, but what it does is it tends to break down the morale of the border-line individual. (4).

Another aspect of the "uncoachable" player is one in which the player does not respond to the coaching methods and strategies used by the coach.

For example, not wanting to change, not wanting to listen to coaches, not considering the things that are important to the coach are certainly traits of the uncoachable player. The individual happens to be playing for what he thinks is important. I don't consider a bad attitude necessarily as a lack of discipline. I think a bad attitude is one of uncoachability and lack of response to the particular coach he is playing for. (8).

In the same vein another informant said:

He is not coachable as far as I am concerned with fundamental skills. He's not willing to adjust or to learn the skills the way they should

be learned. This has got to be differentiated from the fact they may not be able to do this. There's a difference from not being able to do it and trying to do it. (2).

A slightly different example of uncoachability is related here:

It may not be a skill, it may be a matter of little things, like being on time, maybe the individual doesn't feel being on time is important. Maybe he played in a situation where being on time wasn't important. In the specific instance that we're talking about, maybe the coach does feel that this is important. And that individual isn't willing to change what is in the past; to adjust to a coaching situation. (8).

The key here as the coach pointed out is the player's "not being able to adjust to the coaching situation."

Another coach referred to the following when he spoke of uncoachability:

Basically I think it's a lack of hustle, a lack of cooperation in accordance to what the coach wants. . . A bad attitude is, to me, when a kid doesn't want to go along with the trend of things that you want. (9).

A college coach thought of an uncoachable player first when discussing a bad attitude.

I think in my mind a bad attitude, first of all, is what I consider a "negative attitude. . . For example, in a given technique or in a given skill, he may have learned it a different way and under a different coach. Or he may think his way of doing it is the best way. In cases it may be as good or maybe it is better; nevertheless, the coach is responsible for the performance of the team. And a lot of time he wants it done that way so that he can justify to himself why something does or doesn't work. (5).

Certainly it is apparent, in the above statements, that going along with what the coach wants, as far as fundamentals and style of play are concerned, is very important. Being late for practice may be more subtle than the other uncoachable examples given.

Some coaches are not as glib as others. They are in agreement, however, with the idea that players must accept the coach and his methods.

Well, I think that there might be quite a few things that make up a guy's personality that might cause a bad attitude. One thing might be that he might not accept the coach and his coaching methods. (7).

Another coach, when categorizing the bad attitude, said that a major category for him would be the athlete who is "not coachable. In other words he is not prepared to take instruction." (6).

One coach said "characteristics (about a bad attitude) that are noticeable. . .one definitely would be--a negative attitude towards receiving coaching." (4). He went on to say,

Maybe with the real bad ones, the chronic case of bad attitude, could be possibly the kid who absolutely refuses to accept any coaching at all, who cannot accept any decision you make, questioned any methodology that you attempt to teach because he knows better--his father told him so, because the little league coach has told him so. I think probably that could be the worst one. We don't know what to do. We just tell him to find another program. (4).

Thus far, the type of bad attitude, uncoachability, has been spoken about by the coaches in terms of a poor learning situation for the teacher (the coach) and pupil (the player). Another property of the uncoachable player that coaches expressed was insubordination.

Insubordination

Insubordination was expressed as a symptom of the bad attitude. Below a coach gave his thoughts:

I don't run into the kids who are insubordinate--so this is something I don't experience. I think a large degree of bad attitude as far as insubordination is concerned is that kids don't respect your knowledge. I think if they respect your knowledge--they're afraid to openly challenge you in that respect. (8).

The above statement has a key idea in it--"if they respect your knowledge they are afraid to openly challenge you. . ." The player may or may not be afraid (my emphasis) but they are more likely to be reluctant to challenge a coach if they respect his knowledge.

According to some coaches, however, players have more subtle ways of undermining a coach's authority rather than an open challenge.

One coach talked about the subtleties of insubordination he sensed:

I think these kids are trying to find themselves. They'll try to find out who they really are, and they're going to try all sorts of ding-dong things. They're going to push you on every issue, not because they don't care for you, athletics is one place where they can do this. It's a different way, let's say, than from the classroom. This is just a way to do it. All the guys maybe they want white shoes, where black has always been the standard. This is the way they're trying to exert themselves, to have a change. (3).

The above statement was clarified by the same coach and additional examples were given.

When I think from there, a kid might not care for the coach, respect what he says, but yet like him. Today, there is a tendency, you know, to blow the hair out of the face, to have a longer type hair. I don't object to that; this is sort of a minor problem that can be worked out. Where the kid does respect the program, he likes baseball, but due to the way times are, hair styles and so on, he fudges a little bit and lets his hair grow a little bit longer than he knows should be done and maybe he doesn't shave for two or three days, and there was a slight mustache. I think this is not rebelliousness, but kind of pushing a little bit. Sort of exerting his independence. . . Like for example, in baseball, I like to have the shoes shined, clean sanitary socks worn under the game socks. I like the hair neatly trimmed. (3).

The above statements also reflect the idea that one coach made when he said, "I feel kids should go along with the requirements that the coach makes." (1).

Another coach dealt with insubordination in a different way. He said:

A coach shouldn't expect them (the players)--he should demand them to do things--I mean that if a coach is a coach, what he says goes. I think that kids should either live up to that or get out. I don't think that if a coach says something, and the kid doesn't do it, I don't think a coach should label it as a bad attitude. I think he should probably get rid of him. I think every coach would probably agree with that. (9).

Another coach said:

Maybe there's been some kid where there's been some drinking or something off-colored in respect to the team--you look at this as being a factor leading to a bad attitude. (7).

This last statement refers to being disrespectful towards the team. Previous statements about disrespectability were in reference to the coach. This concept provides the basis for further grounding of the "bad attitude."

The idea that a "bad attitude" may begin on the bench seems to be a valid one, according to the coaches. Also, from the data, one gets a feeling that the uncoachable player is uncoachable because he is interested mainly in his performance and success rather than in the success of the team. This seems to be particularly true when a player realizes that the team is not going to be a winner. Consequently, a coach may have to deal with one who may be termed a selfish player.

The Selfish Player

One coach felt:

Probably the number one attitude that you have to really deal with, especially in a team sport, is a selfish attitude. A person that doesn't really care about others, all he cares about is if he succeeds. This is something that is tough to conquer. Maybe you'll never conquer it. It certainly carries over to the rest of the ball club. Especially if you've got the kids with great athletic ability, doing a good job in everything, but not caring about anything else. This is a tough decision for a coach, especially if he demands leadership and team unity and this type of thing. (8).

Another coach explained selfishness in terms of:

I think it's a kid that comes down on the field and doesn't have the real team cooperation--for example, a kid who comes out and all he can think about is his own personal honors, personal glory, and he doesn't care whether we win or lose--all he thinks is that "I want that personal glory." In a sense, it's when a kid goes down on the field and doesn't think of his team as a unit--a kid who only thinks about his own personal glory. (2).

Certainly an athlete cares about his performance. It has been the experience of many coaches that high school and college athletes do care more about their own performances than the success of the team. It must

be emphasized, however, that it is not always the case with all players. Many care more for the team than they do for themselves.

One of the largest challenges in coaching any team sport is to attain a level of cooperation and teamwork where all of the athletes are working together, "pulling for each other." That seems to be one of the most justifiable educational goals used to justify interscholastic or intercollegiate baseball. It then becomes quite easy to believe this characteristic of the bad attitude as being of major concern to the coach.

Another coach explained selfishness as ". . .the individual. . . continuously not willing to give of himself for the benefit of the team. He's got an "I" complex. . ." (4).

Yet another coach pointed out that the selfish player has a desire to excel.

Selfishness is in itself pretty hard to measure. With a kid with a desire to excel--it leads in some cases, to selfishness. (5).

In the following statement the same coach pointed out degrees of a bad attitude and how the selfish player has more of a bad attitude than does another player with a different type of bad attitude.

I think that there are varying degrees of attitudes in everything. The individual that fights himself--that gets down on himself--might not necessarily have as bad an attitude as a player on your team that is out for what he can get, at the expense of some other player on the team, or doesn't have the type of personality that gets along with some of his other peers. In other words, he's probably selfish with the coach just as well. (5).

According to the coaches, the selfish characteristic of the bad attitude is not limited to any one particular type of player. He could be a player of great ability who could care less how the team does or he could be a player of lesser talent with a burning desire to excel. If he puts his own success above the team's, however, it is very possible,

according to the coaches, to become very frustrated if success does not happen. When the player is unsuccessful--i.e., he strikes out or makes an error in the field--he may lash out in a temper tantrum or manifest some form of immature behavior.

The Immature Player

The fifth type of bad attitude that emerged from the data was the immature attitude. Most coaches equated immaturity with the showing of temper--sometimes to the point of a tantrum.

One coach talked about his experiences with the immature athlete.

I think it depends on the type of bad attitude, for one thing. In other words, what you define as a bad attitude, for example, if you define throwing a bat, or cussing when failure occurs, talking back now and then, or something like that, if these things are defined as bad attitudes, then I don't think that they are necessarily always a problem. I think that sometimes it's because of a lack of maturity or because of a need of competition. They may be temporary problems, but not real problems. (2).

Another coach agreed with the above statement.

Well I don't think a kid's throwing a bat down can tend to be a bad attitude. A lot of guys do. This is more a sign of immaturity of which they generally grow out of, probably seventy-five or eighty percent of the cases. . The individual that sulks is probably the one we get the most. If he doesn't get a base hit he will sulk and mope back to the bench. (6).

The same coach also equated immaturity with a lack of mental toughness. He made the point by describing that when a player gets into a higher classification of ball (college or pros) or with people of equal or better ability then "that's the acid test right there. . .if the guy doesn't have the good attitude, the maturity and the mental toughness he needs then he can just kiss it (the baseball career) good-bye." (6).

Following are some typical examples of immature behavior as described by high school baseball coaches:

When an athlete throws a bat, or his helmet, that's not necessarily a bad attitude--it's a sign of immaturity, and I think that you're obligated to tell them that it's hard on equipment, for one thing, and for another thing, it's something that he's going to have to grow up a little bit, or he's going to have to do something about it. (4).

Throwing his glove down--which is a form of projection; in other words he drops a fly ball, he looks at his glove, throws the glove down. He looks at his bat--and he slams the bat up against the backstop, projects the blame on to the umpire for striking out. This sort of thing is all part of what I consider the syndrome. (3).

Another informant further described immature behavior.

If kids strike out and you happen to say something to them and then they fling their helmets and throw their bats and mumble something under their breaths, I think this has to be dealt with. You've got to get the kids after the game and sit down after the rest of the kids have gone and just find out what the problem is. (5).

A college coach disagreed with the high school coaches in that he did not feel he could control his players' reactions to failure (when the immature behavior took place).

I had this one kid--he played second base, and he had exceptional balance and he was good but he was an Irishman, you know how they are. Like every time that he'd strike out, he'd throw the bat against the bleachers. I think that was something that he couldn't control. I think that he was mostly a good competitor, and there is a very fine line between a bad attitude and a good competitor, I think. (9).

A good competitor can also translate to mean a poor loser. It probably depends on what a person views as being a poor sport. Most people might think that throwing equipment is a sign of immature behavior. Depending on the person, however, it could be that the player wants to succeed more than most others and needs some sort of release for his frustration.

From my experiences as a former player and present day umpire, coaches seem to work very hard at getting players to act in a mature way--i.e., not throwing equipment, cursing at umpires, and the like, because it detracts from the player's performance. If a player is

preoccupied with berating an umpire, for instance, he obviously cannot maximally concentrate on the game itself. Since concentration is necessarily an important factor for a player to perform well, the coaches readily equated a lack of concentration with being physically lazy. (10).

Another type of bad attitude that emerged from the data was loafing.

The Loafer

The loafer was seen as lazy--not a "hustler." A coach introduced loafing as a manifestation of a bad attitude by saying it was:

Somebody who doesn't hustle during drills. When moving to one teaching station from another he takes his time, doesn't bust his fanny to get there. I think this is where a bad attitude develops. (3).

He gave an account of one incident of laziness on the field:

One summer at a legion game after I played the preliminary game I went up and showered and came back down sitting in the stands, and a player hit a ground ball right at the shortstop, and so the player takes eight or nine steps out of the batter's box and turns right around and goes back to the bench. That type of action I would definitely question because you don't know what's going to happen; the shortstop could fire the ball clear over the first baseman's head and he would wind up on second base. (3).

Another coach said this about the loafer:

I think all these things (the bad attitude) are formed by habit. I think a lot of times a kid didn't learn to push himself, and to give all out. A lot of times that happens in the south--they seem to be slow moving, slow talking, and always taking it easy--especially black kids. I've had a few black kids--they just kind of went through the motions and didn't really push themselves. I don't think it's their fault exactly. It stems from their background, and they've never really been pushed. I think it's a coach's job to instill this desire into them. (7).

Another coach also agreed with the statement on desire when he said:

I have a shortstop right now--who has a bad attitude. Supposedly he's a very good ball player, but I think he's shown a lack of hustle, and lack of desire. (8).

Some coaches often used their memories of high school sports to influence their beliefs as a coach.

I think that a good example that I can think of when I was in high school, is if a coach didn't see us sprint from station to station during football practice, he'd say that that kid has a bad attitude. I think that's probably the best example. . .I think probably any coach will agree with that. . .Sure there's a time and a place, but a lot of coaches are probably more emotional than some, and an emotional coach, if he stresses hustle and things like this, if a kid doesn't do this, then he is labeled as having a bad attitude. (9).

So far, the coaches talk has centered around loafing as a physical manifestation of the bad attitude, but there was also a mental aspect. Some of the coaches felt that players really didn't care what happened during the game and termed those players as "indifferent." One college coach thought that loafing and playing indifferently were quite similar.

I think my philosophy of coaching has been to characterize the indifferent player who has kind of an "I don't care" attitude right up there with the loafer. They're really one in the same in that one loafers physically--something you can see--and one loafers mentally. You can't see that. (8).

Another college coach described the indifferent player this way:

A kid that doesn't care really how the team does and he doesn't necessarily have to be selfish. I think that a bad attitude is more determined in the actions of the kid--like if a kid makes a mistake, and says, "Well, what the heck. I really don't care anyhow." That, to me, is a bad attitude. (7).

Another informant coach described indifference this way:

Seems like when he was in the ball game, I've seen him smile out there while we were losing. . .he's played so far all season now, and I think it's because he thinks he's good and there's no room for improvement--so if he feels that he didn't do really good in a certain ball game, he thinks that that's just it--he can't do any better, and he can't stand all that mediocre playing. (1).

He further described indifference:

when you see somebody that actually smiles when losing, and thinks he's doing a good job, and thinks a particular play is funny to him. . .(1).

It seemed to this coach that the player was actually happy to be on a losing team.

Certainly attitudes are seen to change from time to time. Also the categories of bad attitude already mentioned are easily discerned. But what of the athlete who "fakes" the coach into thinking that his attitude is good?

The Faker

Four coaches suspected that athletes fake a good attitude. Their statements follow:

There are coaches that just won't put up with them--they either show up a good attitude, whether it's false or whether it's really meaningful. (8).

When asked how a player could fake a good attitude, the same coach replied,

Well, I'd keep my mouth shut, and that's one way that I could fake a good attitude. Sometimes you may not recognize that a kid has a bad attitude, because you never see it--he may keep it from you. Yet he may be destroying your team too-with that bad attitude. (8).

Another informant coach said this about faking a good attitude:

I think it's awful hard to fake a mental attitude. . .You can tell by their actions whether or not they are acting differently than they feel. (4).

A college coach said:

I think that maybe this is another type of bad attitude. I think that maybe an individual has bad attitudes or negative attitudes and the coach may not know it. In other words what is he doing to help the team or the program when he's not around you, when the coach is not able to know what he is doing? (7).

Another coach saw this same group in a slightly different way.

Well, then I think you have a group in between that may fake you out. There are the rebellious types who don't want to do anything. And there are persons who respect the program, like the sport, and just may be a minor thing about the hair. Then you've got these sort of inbetweeners, the kind that ride on the fence, and you never know for sure what they're thinking. You don't know whether to hook up with the rebellious type of person or whether they're going to hook

up with who respects the program. I mean these you don't know from day to day--their attitudes could change. (3).

The faker presents an unusual problem for the coach because all outward signs may indicate that the player is behind his program completely. Yet, the player can be a real detriment to the team because he may exhibit any one of or a combination of bad attitude characteristics when the coach is not paying attention to him or is not around.

The coaches, as a group, were sympathetic with their players' wishes and were reluctant to stereotype a player as having a bad attitude to other members of their coaching staffs. One coach said: "Just because I had trouble with a player doesn't mean that the football or basketball coach will." (6).

Stereotyping of athletes in this type of educational setting could be elaborated into a full study. It is similar to stereotyping a "slow learner" early in his academic life and could be just as damaging to the athlete's ultimate success in the field of athletics. (10).

Summary

In this chapter, the coaches recounted their experiences that caused them to characterize certain players as having bad attitudes. Players exhibiting bad attitudes were characterized as: (a) the Alibier, (b) the Benchwarmer, (c) the Uncoachable Player, (d) the Selfish Player, (e) the Immature Player, (f) the Loafer, and (g) the Faker. Each bad attitude type may be characteristically different, yet each somehow gets in the coaches' way--becomes a threat to their authority, as they see it, and a deterrent to the ultimate success of their teams. In the next chapter, the study emphasizes the circumstances associated with bad attitudes and the personality traits of individual players which contribute to the bad attitude as described by the coaches.

Chapter 3

PERFORMANCE SUMMARIZERS

Introduction

While interviewing coaches it was fascinating to discover how coaches used the language of sport to summarize the performances of their athletes. It was an experience to find that they tend to "gloss" as the nature of their ordinary talk. Coaches are not as precise as chemists because they are not interested in detail. Coaches are very impressionistic, idealist, and full of labels and handles. These terms that coaches so frequently express in describing a bad attitude shall be called performance summarizers.

It is important to recognize that the world is full of glossy labels charged with emotion. In the academic world, for instance, some people are thought of as researchers, publishers, or grants hustlers. It is all of this notion that allows the members of the academic society to quickly summarize, label, and categorize the individual.

The athletic world has its performance summarizers, too. For example, two college basketball coaches are pictured in a discussion about a six foot, ten inch potential superstar. One coach says to the other, "What do you think of him?"

"He's a blue chipper."

That is all that needs to be said. The player has been labeled and his performance summarized. The two coaches understand the meaning of the gloss label, "blue chipper."

In this study, performance summarizing examples will focus on: (a) the circumstances that informant coaches gave as an explanation for performance of the team, and (b) the personality traits of individual players as described by the coaches.

Circumstances Associated With a Bad Attitude

Although mentioned briefly in the previous chapter, the coaches' explanation of particular circumstances that contribute to a bad attitude will be expanded here at length. One kind of performance summarizer is the coach's report of the losing season. Losing a lot of games is to a coach a circumstance that is very real.

Losing Games

The losing season was mentioned frequently by the coaches in the interviews. According to one coach "losing tends to magnify every mistake that is made--both physical (like errors in the field) and tactical (strategy used by the coach)." (2).

Another coach said:

A good attitude is very important in the figures. (He was referring to win-loss percentages.) I don't say that you're going to be a loser just because you have a bad attitude, but I think that in order to be a winner, you have to have a good attitude. (9).

A high school coach pointed out that "It's a hell of a lot easier to develop a bad attitude or have a kid with a bad attitude when you get thumped all the time. . ." (1).

What the coaches seemed to imply is that bad attitudes are more likely to develop among players on a losing team than on a winning team. It is likely that other reasons may contribute to a bad attitude. One apparent reason, according to the coaches, is that players may have times during the season when they get into a slump.

Lack of Individual Success -

A lack of individual success was recognized by the coaches as being a major contributor to a bad attitude. Certainly, coaches tried to make baseball practice drills learning situations where the player could make the correct play and in doing so lift the player's self-confidence. In other words, it is important for the player to enjoy some success. If during the actual play, however, the player does not have the success that he desires (the slump) then a bad attitude is often, as one coach said, "right around the corner." (6).

If it is a hitting slump where the player has not gotten a hit for five or six games, then according to the coaches he probably has a pretty poor image of himself. A coach said, ". . . he has a very low self-concept. He doesn't see himself as having any value to the team." (3).

The player can begin as one coach said, "questioning himself. . . because of his lack of confidence." (7). He pointed out an important idea, too: "The percentages are against the undisciplined player who keeps late hours and misses practice. He gets in a tight situation and can't do it." (7).

The coaches' implications seem clear enough: If a player has prepared himself sufficiently, through practice, then he has a much better chance for success, thus the elimination of a bad attitude. A typically found comment was:

Whereas an individual has done everything that he has to do to get where he is, he is just going to say, "Well, I just couldn't get it done, I just didn't do it." It's not going to be the umpire, it's not going to be the coach, it's not going to be the fans, or the field, it's just going to be he didn't do it. Most of the time he's going to feel confident to do it, because he's done everything he's had to do in order to get the job done. (5).

Other coaches seemed to support what this coach said because in the description of the bad attitude some coaches indicated that many players seemed to lack certain qualities that brought on the circumstances associated with that same bad attitude. Those performance summarizing qualities mentioned by the coaches that some players lack are: desire, hustle, willingness to "pay the price" or "put out," concentration or "mental toughness," ability to "bear down," and leadership.

Personality Traits of Individual Players

It is necessary to look at a definition of desire according to the coaches. One coach defined desire this way:

I think desire comes from that feeling that an athlete wants to win. Winning is, of course, an important part of any sport that you play competitively. There are some things that you can play that aren't as competitive as others, and desire is an attitude that allows a player to work hard and develop his skills so that he is part of a winning team. (9).

A statement by another coach reflected a similar point of view: "development of an attitude, and a winning spirit, are the things that comprise desire. . .that helps make an individual become a good citizen." (3).

Another coach viewed desire this way:

Desire is a hunger that is within one's self to have success. I think that someone who gets discouraged over a period of time doesn't have success, certainly really doesn't want to participate in the sport. It is something within one's self to succeed. Other than that I can't really explain it. (2).

The previous three viewpoints reflect the individualistic point of view: desire is a personal quality bent on winning. The following statement is from a coach who saw desire in terms of contributing to the team. "Desire means that ability to contribute to the group and to assume responsibility." (1).

From my own coaching experience, the player's acceptance of responsibility, particularly in a leadership role, is a laudable quality simply due to the dependability factor. If a coach feels that he can depend on his players to be punctual, to do their best, and to be helpful towards each other, then he can hardly ask for more. (10).

Another coach had an interesting interpretation when he described desire. He said, "Desire is also the ability to accept." (4). He pointed out, as did other coaches, that there are times when the coach has to be "sort of a benevolent dictator." (4). This requires that the players have respect for the coach and his abilities to make arbitrary decisions and judgments during practice and game situations. Some of these arbitrary judgments may involve personnel and/or style of play. The coaches felt that "due to lack of time for practice" (5) (these coaches were regulated to two hours per day) some coaching decisions just had to be accepted by the players. One coach was quick to point out, however, that he would always be available to discuss with a player any decision that affected that player, after practice (not during), because of the time factor. (4).

Another coach discussed desire in terms of working to better one's self:

It's just one of those things where an outfielder has to continually take batting practice. Or in the off season, if he has a week arm, he'd work on a weight program or work on conditioning and different things. There's no tangible thing that you can really see, but they really make a lot of difference when you're playing. That makes the difference between being good and great. (3).

Other coaches associated "enthusiasm" and the gloss term, "mental quickness" with desire. One coach discussed "mental quickness" as being alive and in the game. . .aware of the situation. . .asking himself,

'What do I do if the ball is hit to me?'" (9).

Most coaches seemed to agree that desire was as one coach put it, "one of the most important factors" (8) pertaining to a player's attitude.

Another coach had difficulty in separating the terms "desire" and "hustle" and said that they "kind of followed in the same order." (6).

Hustle

An informant gave several typically found examples of "hustle":

I think a guy who hustles, to me, means being able to keep yourself physically and mentally in the game or in the practice. It means running back from your position. It means being able to take another guy's glove, when he might have forgotten it or he might have been on the base. It means hustling out, running out to warm up the pitcher or something like this. To me hustle is mental. It is something that keeps the individual alert. It's mental motivation more than anything else. (9).

Another coach agreed with the concept that hustle is mental alertness. In doing so he said,

The reason I'm interested in hustle is that it keeps mental sharpness. In other words, if a kid is loafing, I feel he is loafing mentally too. If he sprints, and is quick to move, he's going to be a quick thinker. (7).

A college coach pointed out that a lack of hustle leads to the making of mental mistakes "like throwing to the wrong base. . .if a kid isn't anticipating, he isn't thinking about the game. In baseball, you have to anticipate. (8).

Another coach discussed hustle in these terms:

On a baseball field, it's making that extra effort--like going after a fly ball, or somebody that's really hustling will try to hit the ground to make that catch--if a kid's not hustling, he'll let it fall--he has that kind of lack of interest. (1).

It is interesting to note the glossy language that the coaches used. For instance, the previous statement referring to "extra effort" is used quite often. Other glossy terms with similar meanings are "putting out" and "paying the price."

A high school coach discussed conditioning: "In the long run, I think that conditioning makes a team attitude. It's what makes the difference. It's called 'paying the price'." (3).

Paying the Price

"Paying the price" can have different meanings. It may mean sacrificing some individual rights as this coach pointed out:

If the coach feels that there should be rules against smoking and drinking, I think he (the player) should take it. If he doesn't like it, fine. If not, then he shouldn't be involved. It's just one of the responsibilities that he (the player) has to accept when he becomes part of the team. Everyone has to give up a few individual rights. (4).

Of course, to be proficient at anything a person has to sacrifice along the way. Another coach explained it this way:

Well, I believe to be a good athlete or great athlete, you're going to have to give up something. Whatever that something is. It might be something you really enjoy, to be that something that's a little bit better. That's what I call paying the price. You may never have to attain the level your're competing at. But sooner or later if you want to get to that element which is the major leagues, whether it be football, basketball, or baseball, you're going to pay somewhat of a price. Unless you're a super player. Even then you have to pay the price. (5).

A college coach pointed out that "paying the price" depends on the individual.

Well, I think again this, at times, is an individual matter. Say that the ability level is equal. I think the individual, in my definition of a good attitude, has paid the price to be where he is. He's worked hard, he's learned, he's put a good effort into it, he may have sacrificed a little along the way, he's dedicated to being a good athlete, he's out there playing because he wants to play, he's doing the best job he can. I think in a tight situation he's going to get it done. (8).

The same college coach discussed how the bad attitude player will react in a game situation because he has not "paid the price."

Whereas the other individual (bad attitude player) hasn't got anything to draw from, he hasn't disciplined himself to do things the right way. He hasn't got anything to draw from as far as

working hard is concerned. Maybe it's because he hasn't paid any attention to a situation that may have come up, and he's not ready for it. The individual with the negative attitude has somewhere along the line eliminated some of the things that are going to make him better in this type of situation. (8).

A high school coach discussed what not "paying the price" means in terms of the athlete who has a bad attitude.

The attitude we've been talking about is the kid that maybe has great athletic ability, but doesn't really pay attention, doesn't really put forth effort, he doesn't really pay a price to be better than what he really should be. (6).

Putting Out

Another coach seemed to agree that not "putting out" (which according to the coaches is the same thing as paying the price) makes up a bad attitude. He explained it this way:

I basically think it is the athlete who is not willing to give of himself, for the benefit of the team, is probably the number one characteristic that is noticeable. . he will be the individual lax to some extent, continuously not willing to give of himself for the benefit of the team. He is very concerned about, oh, let's say, he's got an "I" complex--he's just not willing to put out basically. Then making sacrifices oftentimes--I know that has been a big issue in the past at many schools. (3).

One coach felt that:

If the kids are not willing to be concerned about improving themselves, they stand around and waste a hell of a lot of time. I think basically the kid who is not willing to put out and better himself for the welfare of the entire team is the one who will end up with the bad attitude and probably be eliminated from the program if we find out about it early enough. (2).

One informant definitely felt that laziness was equated with the lack of ability to "put out."

He's the one who doesn't make it to practice or shows up late. It's not a spotty thing. It's something that happens repeatedly. It just seems he's lazy. If he can find time to sluff off, then he'll sluff off, he'll sluff off when he thinks the coach is not watching. (5).

The phrases "putting out" and "paying the price" have been well described as to their meanings and implications. As has been pointed out--sacrifice or sacrificing something, along the way, appears to be a common denominator. It needs no further explanation. However, there are still other circumstances associated with a bad attitude that are closely related to those already mentioned.

Bearing Down

One coach referred to players of different ability levels while discussing the non-ability of some players to "bear down":

I think that what you're up against is that fact that the bad attitude kid does not bear down, does not concentrate one hundred percent of the time or close to whatever (one hundred percent) is to a kid and therefore his chances of coming through are greatly reduced irrespective of his ability. He may have superior ability but he's only with it fifty percent of the time. Whereas, a kid with less ability, bearing down all the time, just by sheer chance, I suppose will come through more often. I'm certain that that's it. The guy that doesn't give you one hundred percent always makes a big mistake, when it counts. That's an empirical observation. (4).

The concentration factor is an important part of any athletic event. Many times in television interviews, for instance, participants allude to mental concentration and preparation as important ingredients in sport contests. The gloss term is referred to as "mental toughness."

Mental Toughness

A quality dealing with the mental aspects of playing baseball is that of "mental toughness." Some coaches definitely felt that a lack of mental toughness was a characteristic of a bad attitude ". . .it's definitely a large part of a bad attitude. It's just like that old saying, 'When the going gets tough, the tough get going.'" (9).

That "old saying" as referred to by the previous coach does have a lot of meaning regardless of the differing views that are held on organized athletics. As one matures and reflects on the "big games" that he has played in he may have been "tough," he may not have been "tough" or maybe he was both. Certainly almost every player is nervous before an important contest and, depending on the course that the game takes, he becomes tougher (or weaker) as the game progresses.

According to some players who were interviewed, mental toughness meant "stick-to-itiveness" and being able to cope with adversity during a game. It meant similar things to the coach but more in relation to winning or losing. One coach discussed how mental toughness was part of the "acid test":

Where the chips are really on the table is when some college fellow or some scout picks him up, and puts him in with people who have equal ability, or better ability than he does. And that's the acid test right there. You find yourself there or you lose yourself there, and if the guy doesn't have the good attitude, the maturity and the mental toughness he needs, then he can just kiss it good-bye. (3).

Leadership

According to the coaches the final quality that many bad attitude players lacked was leadership. Below, a coach described what a leader is and what leadership meant to his team.

I have leaders and they do a great job. They sit on the bench and they talk to kids and possibly try to help them. 'Hey, nice going.' I think a leader is a person kids look up to, either physically or mentally, being willing to accept them as part of the fellows. This is what a leader is. (5).

The player who talks a lot either on the bench or on the field is typically termed as a "holler guy." However, the "holler guy" concept of a leader is only one area of leadership. The player who, through his

actions on the field, can spur his team on to victory is usually preferred by the informant coaches.

We use that term (leader) a hell of a lot. I think when you look for a kid who is a great leader, it's not necessarily a holler guy, or a guy who says a whole lot, but a guy who demonstrates he has mature qualities, he demonstrates his leadership mainly by actions. I think the best leader I had was a kid who would demonstrate his leadership through action. (7).

Does action speak louder than words? Generally in baseball-- the answer would have to be "yes" for obvious reasons. It is a game in which all players are required to often perform difficult maneuvers like fielding and turning double plays, catching line drives and fly balls, and hitting a baseball that is traveling approximately ninety to one hundred miles per hour. The player who can master the skills necessary to consistently perform these skills just mentioned will likely be thought of as a leader by the coach and other players.

Another coach explained leadership this way:

The leaders are the ones that get the ball players out there and working--they're the ones that run the team. They make all the difference; I don't have to worry about them either. (2).

It has been my observation as a result of six years experience as a baseball umpire that pitching, particularly at the high school and college level, is seventy-five to ninety percent of the game. That is to say that the pitcher has more of an influence on the course that the game takes, the strategies followed by the teams playing, and eventually the final outcome of the game than any other player on the field. (10). The coaches typically felt that it was important for the pitcher to lead the team.

One informant discussed the pitcher as being a leader in the traditional sense of the word:

I think that a pitcher has more individual attitude, and has more opportunities to show it, and he most often does. He has to take all of the rough stuff that the other team gives to him. As far as their need to lead, I think this is necessary. That's kind of a tradition in baseball. (9).

A further responsibility of the "leader" is to set an example for other players in regards to training rules. A coach explained:

I always try to explain to the kids that we have certain rules and regulations, and these guys were great because they knew we had them and they helped enforce them. We have very few discipline problems as far as attitude is concerned. (4).

In a similar manner a coach told me about a team he had coached the year previous to the interview. During that season leadership was the team's long suit. It seemed that the team did not have any outstanding physical talent but it was able to win due to its belief in the team members. He described leadership in terms of maturity. ". . .maturity would be one thing. Possibly demonstrating this maturity through actions would be the best way I could ever describe it." (6).

Summary

One of the most interesting findings of this study was the discovery of glossy language usage by the informant coaches to summarize the performances of their players. Coaches tended to "gloss" as the nature of their ordinary talk in an effort to label and categorize their players. I took the terms that coaches frequently used in describing the bad attitude and called them performance summarizers.

Performance summarizing examples focused on: (a) the circumstances associated with a bad attitude, and (b) the personality traits of the individual players as described by the coaches. The posture that a coach has regarding not trying (and what causes it) in this Performance Summarizers section predicts the kind of intervention strategy they used to manage that bad attitude. These phenomenon will be examined in the following chapter.

Chapter 4

MANAGING A BAD ATTITUDE

Introduction

Coaches, themselves, are concerned with the management of a bad attitude and usually seek to establish some sort of positive relationship with their players even before the season starts. These relationships are based on "an honest and realistic appraisal of what the player has to do to be successful on our team." (4).

The informant coaches pointed to three procedures used to manage bad attitudes: (a) communication, (b) analysis, and (c) dismissal from the team. Many of the coaches felt that communicating with their players about rules, regulations, techniques, strategies and what to expect once the season began was a good procedure in managing (and sometimes preventing) a bad attitude.

Communication

According to the coaches, dialogue between coach and athlete appeared to be the first step in dealing with the player who exhibited a "bad attitude." A college coach started his communication process apparently before the season's beginning and carried it through to the end of the schedule.

I think first of all the whole thing has got to start with communication. In other words, I feel it is my responsibility to let all the ball players know what we expect, at the beginning of the season. We expect them to hustle, be on time; we expect them to give their best effort they are capable of, no matter what the situations are. We expect them to help each other, we expect them to encourage each other, to let us do the coaching, and for them to concentrate on their weaknesses, and to improve.

. . .Then we'll say, 'We told you this and this is what we expect.' We explain what they're not doing and why it's important to to it. . .each time they exhibit some type of bad attitude we'll try to correct it. (8).

A high school coach felt similarly:

I think you definitely communicate first. I think that makes all the difference. When a kid has a bad attitude, you have to make him realize what the situation is. I've had a few kids that have family problems, but you can't know what's wrong with them unless you sit down and talk to them. That's the only thing that you can do. (3).

One informant approached his communication with players in a slightly different manner than other coaches. His three phase "communication package" took a lot of extra time and work.

How I obtain that is probably a bit different than other coaches. I learned this in professional ball that to obtain success and to have a good attitude, every ball player has got to know each other and this isn't just between the white lines but off and on the field. So I developed some different techniques that I use that I think in the long run will help me. First I have a locker room designed for baseball players only, a lounge. They can come down during the school day, they can work together. They can work things out off the field. They can talk with each other. They can do all types of things. It's not just baseball, it's socially--outside the setting of the athletic field. Secondly, I've tried to develop some programs with the parents so that they understand what I'm trying to do is not just between the white lines but also off the field. Number three is that with the parents we have the kids participate in social events: have them over to your house; going to their house; going on hiking trips somewhere; going down to the coast whether it be for baseball or leisure time activity. I think this gives the guys an awareness of themselves and the other ball players. Therefore they can at least understand each other. So at least they can have a better attitude about themselves and a better attitude about the other ball players. (5).

If this "communication package" was successful then the coach felt more at ease with his players because he knew that they now understood him. He explained why this was necessary:

I've probably been characterized as a yeller, and some people really misunderstand me. I think that if I've done my job off the field, that they know me better, they'll never take anything personally--sort of constructive criticism. And boy at times I get mad, but I know that that kid is a person up there and needs to get something positive as well as something that is negative criticism.

So I think I've tried to adjust myself. I'm going to yell at them in a positive way. I'm going to make a statement that may cause him to think. (5).

A similar idea of communicating with a player who exhibits characteristics of bad attitude was also put to good use by another high school coach:

Well, first of all, I try to talk to him. I try to show him there are some basic inadequacies, that I as a coach don't think are a positive trait in a person's personality. Usually there are ways for you to work on him, if you can catch them early enough. We get them when they're sophomores and by the time they get to be juniors and seniors they pretty much have this situation in hand. But I think the best thing to do is to sit down and talk with them, and tell them that you're going to evaluate them, and you're going to watch for this bad behavior. On occasion, I think it's really important that you as a coach are alert to situations. You think to yourself he's coming around. (6).

Sometimes direct dialogue between the coach and a player is not appropriate as one coach pointed out. Therefore, he has used some of his "good leaders" hoping that they can influence a bad attitude player in a positive way.

Also you know where four or five guys sit over here and another three or four in another corner, and they don't really communicate with one another. We try to get them together. I think if you've got a bad attitude in that group, one of the best therapies in the world is to get the kids in there with some good leaders, if you're lucky enough to have them. The good leaders would be the best therapists in the world because they would kind of guide this guy, if he is negative, or if he's a sulker or whatever. The kids are really great therapists if they're aware of it and they know what to do. A lot of times if you get a chronic case, there's nothing the kids can do. (2).

There may be times when a coach does finally become impatient with a player and other forms of communication may be in order. A college coach had such an experience with a player where he communicated with the player but only after the player did some extra running after practice.

I told him to run two miles or hang it up. He stood out there for twenty minutes and finally ran two miles, came in and was crying. He's 23 years old. We talked for a couple hours. He cried for about an hour that he was there. He was confused. . . (7).

The coach stated that he often used this technique with "extreme cases" to determine whether or not the athlete wished to stay on the team. Once the player had done the extra running, he was usually tired and angry; however, he was ready to communicate. "He improved from that night on and was a valuable team member." (7).

Usually, the coach has the responsibility of initiating the communication between himself and the player. Also, as the coaches pointed out, the coach has the responsibility of making sure that an understanding is reached that is reasonable for both parties. The decision made during the conversation between the two needs to be agreed upon by the coach and the player. The player needs to know what his role on the team will be.

The Player Should Understand His Role on the Team

One very successful high school coach felt that an understanding between coach and player of what the coach perceives the player's role on the team is enables his teams to be more successful. The informant spent quite a lot of time with each player discussing, in a very open manner, what he felt the player could contribute to the team. Of course, these discussions, the informant said, are based on long observations during pre-season, American Legion or Babe Ruth summer baseball.

I have the philosophy that every man I have on my team is of some value--that he has something he can do. I might only keep a kid who can only run real well and he's a pinch runner and he understands that. What's the difference between that and the man you bring into kick a field goal? I bring him in and I say, 'Look, you can run,' or 'you're the greatest defensive ball player alive. You can't hit me if I walk by you, but you play defense.' You see,

every kid I keep I feel has some place in our total program. If he understands that and he accepts his position, then you make him think that he's worthwhile. Today might not be the day that we need the field goal, or tomorrow might not be the day that he comes in and pinch runs but then you recognize the accomplishments that the kid does. (4).

Another successful coach also felt that a basic understanding of the player's role could not be too highly regarded. He related his views to the player who is not a starter, but is a contributor to a team's success. Generally, this is where a problem can arise because the player thinks that he is being held out of a game unnecessarily. It is interesting that only three coaches felt that the understanding of a role was important--not only to the team, but to the individual player and his subsequent relationship with his coach. It is also interesting to note that the three coaches were the most successful coaches in terms of win-loss records (three state high school and one college league championship among them) and also successful in their relationships with their athletes.

You've got to make an effort to challenge him to better himself, rather than saying that he can't contribute to your ball club. He shouldn't be on your ball club if he can't contribute to it. You've got to make an effort to make him see that he's pushing an under classman, and that the under classman is going to work harder. (2).

The college coach said, "We expect them to help each other. . . and let us do the coaching. I want them to concentrate on their weaknesses and improve." (8).

It seems likely that any player who knows what to expect from a coach in terms of what he can do for the team has a good chance for success because the pressure is off, his ego is out of the way, and he can relax. However, the coach is not as fortunate because as one coach said, "We have fifteen to twenty different personalities to deal with. . ." (6). Many times the coach may have to analyze various

problems on the team and deal with them as he manages attitudes.

The Coaches Analysis of the Bad Attitude

In terms of analyzing a bad attitude and how to manage it, some coaches experienced a phenomenon where their high school and college playing experiences had influenced their present coaching philosophies. One high school coach discussed his opinions on the bad attitude in relation to his previous experiences.

We form opinions based on our previous experiences. It is something that is probably subjective. You can't be completely objective about it. But I would probably say a bad attitude is a value judgment, on our part. But, I try to make that objective judgment based on a number of things, so that I can be more objective than subjective. . . I use enough judgment on my part that if that kid doesn't really want to put forth the effort that I deem necessary, he can do what he wants to do. I think a kid that can handle it, the little structure. I can recognize that also and let the kid do what he wants to as long as he tries and does his best. (4).

A college coach related nearly the same kind of feeling when he stated:

We are what we've grown up under. For instance, if we've grown up under--I'm speaking in relationship with the athlete--now--for instance, if a guy has had a real strict coach all through high school, he is an outgrowth of it, and so he kind of carries over his attitude. It's kind of indoctrinated into our philosophy of coaching. But times are changing. So you have to change. You don't really put up with it, but you bend a little for that year. (9).

In more succinct terms, a high school coach said, "You know, I've got to be honest about that. A kid's idea of a bad attitude could be a little different than the coach's." (4). The same coach went on to bring out another point.

I think that a coach is responsible for an attitude. Kids are human, too. I think that a coach should recognize a problem if there is one. I also think that a coach can be partly responsible for a bad attitude. He can shape a kid's attitude a little bit, by the way he coaches. . ." (4).

Another high school coach worried about a snowballing effect where one bad attitude begets another. He discussed any problems with his players to combat that happening. He said,

What I try to do is to find out why they have a bad attitude because I worry a little bit that they're going to infest their feelings to possibly two or three other people on the squad. This is my main concern. I don't get impatient with them, I try to give them the same amount of time as I give the person who has a good attitude. (5).

The coaches who used analysis as a step in the management of a bad attitude seemed to recognize that their value judgments may hamper their feelings about a player's attitude. This is readily seen in the coach's talk.

Another high school coach began his analysis by determining whether "a bad attitude is caused by physical or mental problems." (2).

This is why I have the parents involved while I look at the athlete's attitude. I try to look at the athlete and then I try to make some type of judgment as to attitude problems. I get a better answer looking at both sides of the problem. (2).

This coach only involved the parents when he considered the player's attitude particularly injurious to the team's proficiency. Often times by talking to a player's parents he was able to tell if he was a cause for the player's bad attitude. He felt that if he could:

get a feel for what the youngster felt about me (the coach) then I can take some positive steps to alleviate the problem. I'm pretty patient with the few players that I've had who, because of our personalities, just can't seem to hit it off with me, because I feel like I need to adjust my thinking towards them as well as them towards me. This is when it becomes particularly important for me to make sure he completely understands his role on the team and the contributions he can make. It becomes a compromise where I tell the kid how I feel how a relationship can be improved and he does likewise. But, I'll tell you, he had better at least meet me halfway on this. If he continues to bad mouth me or act belligerently then I'll take more drastic measures." (2).

After the problem with the athlete has been analyzed, the coaches felt that they had several possibilities open to them as the next step

in dealing with the "bad attitude" athlete. These may be categorized as: (1) counselling, redeeming factor (the chance for the athlete to make it right again); (2) benching the player; or (3) dismissing him from the team.

Counselling the Player

Oftentimes, as has been pointed out by the coaches, a "bad attitude" player will have a damaging effect on other members of the team. This seems to be one of the largest points of concern for the coaches. Consequently, it behooves the coach to get to the root of the bad attitude as quickly as possible. The coaches felt that the best way to get results--after some preliminary communication efforts had been made--was a one-on-one counselling session. (This session would take place after other communication efforts had failed.) This counselling session seemed to be the "last stand" for players before most coaches took more drastic measures such as benching or dismissal.

A state-champion coach took this approach:

If I can channel him so that he's not destructive to the team then I'm not too concerned. If it's a question of he's not satisfied with his performance in relation to his expectations--I can deal with that. But if what he does creates a bad atmosphere for the team--then out he goes. I've got to be honest. Out he goes. I don't monkey with him, because I feel very strongly that the coach is owed something by the players. I mean I think the kids owe me--the coach--something. I don't think our collars are not on backwards and I say that respectfully. Our collare are not on backwards and I think the kids owe us something for our time and our knowledge and the things we give them. I think the kids like the discipline because they see the results of discipline programs--and they want to be successful. (4).

He later ammended this somewhat hard line approach in the following:

We try to counsel kids before we eliminate them from the program. I think in some cases we succeeded in helping attitudes, and in turn we've damaged the other kids; the other nineteen kids in the ball

club. For example, we had one last year. The example was, we had a kid who had played for us the previous year, when we only won the championship. He was a pretty good little infielder, a second baseman. During the end of his junior year and at the start of the senior year at school, he had a little rebelling problem at home. In the fall when school got started his rebellious attitude continued all the way through the season. (6).

The implication is clear enough; one player must not take up so much of the coach's time that other players on the team are necessarily ignored. One surmises from the coaches' talk that the counselling session needs to be productive in the sense that the player takes positive steps to get himself back on track. A coach gave an example of this type of counselling session:

I ask him the question "Why is he out there?" Sometimes we'll take an athlete who is very gifted, but doesn't have a tremendous amount of drive in that sport, to excel in it. Personally I don't want that kid. I'd rather take a kid who has mediocre skill or athletic ability, but has a tremendous drive to excel in his sport. I'd rather work with this type of individual. (5).

Another coach asked his bad attitude players these questions: "Why isn't it important for you to do what I ask you to do?" "Why do you feel it's not important?" He went on to say: "I don't try to rank them, or anything in front of their peers. I'll try to do everything on a one to one basis." (1).

Four coaches related that they often asked themselves why they were losing ballgames. Interestingly, these were the coaches who did have success, not just in terms of win-loss records but had seemingly good rapport with their athletes. A typical question coaches asked was the following:

I guess that I can go home, and I can say to myself 'Why did we lose?' or 'Why did we win?' and I can point to a couple of things like mental attitude and physical attitude as causes for losses. That has happened to me with a couple of ball players that I have had. But I also believe that it is also a good learning experience for them. I had to stick with them and talk to them about why did we lose the ball game? I might even sit down and talk with the

parent, and say 'Hey I think so and so (your son) really caused me some problems today.' But preceding that I will talk with the boy and say 'there are some decisions to be made--that you put me in a bad position. I don't think that it is right to leave you in there. I took you out for those reasons.' That seems to be the easiest way to counsel and get to the heart of the problem. (2).

Some coaches did not use the one on one counselling session, but chose to pressure the player by having him run some laps or a similar kind of punishment to "make it right" with the coach again. A college coach said: "Well, I make my guys run off the field, and if they don't they run sprints after the games. That's what I make them do." (9).

Another coach used this sort of punishment when all avenues of communication were exhausted and he wanted to put the player in a position to decide once and for all whether he wanted to play. . . "I might say, 'All right, you have to run a hundred laps,' or 'You're on the J.V.'s for two weeks,' or 'You don't suit down this game.'" (6).

These types of authoritarian communication techniques were generally used by these two coaches to discourage a player from participating and were not thought to be particularly effective in dealing with the player's bad attitude.

Most of the coaches, however, who did use counselling as a technique in managing a bad attitude felt that one session with a player was sufficient in dealing with any problem. After that as one coach said, "I begin to lose patience with the kid." (8). Once a coach lost his patience with a player the follow-up technique for managing his bad attitude was to bench him.

Benching the Player

It seemed that the main reason for benching a player was due to lack of hustle or enthusiasm. One coach said: "I tell them that if they don't start hustling they are going to spend most of their time sitting

on the bench." (3).

Another coach used benching because he thought it added to the player's production of hits, better fielding plays, etc.

I go for the people that produce for me, and if these people happen to have a bad attitude, then I just sit them on the bench. Then I wait for them to come around. I let them watch the other kids out on the field, and if they don't come around then I just pick another person. I think competition helps attitudes in this respect. It helps to add to the drive. It all adds up to hustle. (2).

Continuing with the same kind of thought pattern, a college coach, it seemed, would sacrifice a chance to win a game to discipline a player.

For example, I had a kid a year ago that didn't have too much enthusiasm but he had ability. I had the personnel--in other words, I had the kids who would replace him, but it would hurt a lot. It did hurt a lot. I couldn't kid myself about that. So I told him either change his attitude or sit the bench. (8).

A high school coach used the bench as a place to talk to any players who displayed bad attitude characteristics such as loss of temper.

He was completely beyond reason, the swearing, and the throwing of the bat and the helmet. You know he might go out there and he might be thinking about the strike out and kick a routine ground ball. So I just sit him down on the bench and then come over, talk to him, find out what his problem is, I try to explain to him, that this isn't the way you go about it; being ticked off with these physical displays. It makes you look like an ass. It makes your whole ball club look like an ass. This year there'll be free substitution, by national rule, so you can put him back in the ball game after you talk to him. (3).

The free substitution that the coach referred to is a rule whereby a coach may substitute for a starting player and at any time after the substitution is made have the same player re-enter the game. The only stipulation is that the re-entering player has to bat in his original spot in the batting order. This rule was, as one coach pointed out:

. . .made in order for the coach to play more players, like pinch-runners, pinchhitters for pitchers, etc., but I've used it in situations where a player needed counselling during a game situation. Oftentimes this type of counselling is the most meaningful because benching him shoved him into a place where he would respond to my coaching. I like the rule because I can bench him to show disapproval

of something he did and then put him back in the game to show I still believe in him as a valuable member of any team. (4).

When benching the player is used as a technique to positively manage a bad attitude it can be very effective. It may point out to a player that his coach is concerned and that the bench is a place where something meaningful in terms of solving a problem can take place. However, if benching a player is used strictly as a punishment or sanctioning device for a lack of hustle, cursing an umpire, or any other bad attitude characteristics then it may not be that effective. If benching the player only creates more bad attitudes (previous talk by the coaches indicated that many bad attitudes begin and grow on the bench) then the coach may be defeating his purpose.

The coaches then indicated that the last step in dealing with the bad attitude was to dismiss the player from the team.

Dismissal of the Bad Attitude Player

The third procedure for managing a bad attitude was expressed. There seemed to be two basic schools of thought on eliminating the players with bad attitudes. One appeared to be the philosophy that as an educator it was the coach's responsibility to channel any and all negative actions into some sort of positive behavior--even at the risk of failing. One coach put it this way:

You rid yourself of problems by trying to channel that bad attitude into a more positive manner. . .As a coach I think you're obligated to know your players. . .so you help them and your team at the same time. (2).

The coach's role as an educator was popular as far as this coach was concerned:

I think for the good of the player, the most successful is the coach that can reach the kid, and improve his attitude, and still

keep him on the ball club. I think that you--as an educator--you're obligated to try and do something about that kid. (2).

Most of the coaches were reluctant to dismiss a player from the team unless they had no other alternative. Before a player was dismissed some of the coaches checked themselves very closely trying to determine whether the criteria they used for dismissal was fair. The coaches' role as an educator certainly had some influence on their decision to dismiss a player from the team. One coach said:

We all live on the philosophy that if we can help a kid better himself for life, his life style, and learn to deal with hard situations, I would say eliminating him from the program would be definitely a last resort. (7).

He discussed (as has been previously noted) that the players probably have quite different opinions about what a bad attitude is and the fact that a coach should have some clearcut ideas concerning discipline, attitudes, and with which he feels comfortable. He also made a key statement concerning a coach's ego. "I think that you have to have a norm too, because if you have fifteen players that you think all have a bad attitude, then I think that you should check yourself as a coach to see what is going wrong." (7).

Along the same line one of the state champion coaches like to check himself out before he dismissed anyone. He said:

I like to think of my actions as part of the team. I think that their attitude goes back to the theory that the whole is only made up of its parts--and the attitude of the athletes on the team and my attitude toward them is going to present an overall team attitude. That attitude is what you have to look at. (2).

From the coaches' talk one gets the idea that the coach arbitrarily makes a decision to dismiss a player when that player either threatens the authority of the coach or when that player's actions are detrimental to the smooth workings of the team. One coach used self improvement as

a criterion: But if this goes on and on and on and we're not making any headway, then we've got to evaluate if the player really wants to improve and if he really fits into our program." (5).

Another coach used negativism as a criterion for dismissal. He explained it this way:

I think that every aspect of the program that has any effect on the players at all must be positive. Basically the program must be positive. If it isn't then it's going to be negative. Anything that is negative in the program is going to detract from individual performance and individual performance is going to detract from team performance. If you've got a shortstop and a second baseman that can't get along with each other because of any factor, then I think you're hurting yourself as far as team unity and team execution goes. (3).

Another criterion for dismissal was pointed out by a state champion high school coach when he said:

I suppose in the final analysis I'm an autocrat. But I think that what we're talking about here that we have to look at the entire good of the team. Maybe I'm rationalizing my rather rigid stand, but what I'm looking at is I can't see where it's any more unfair to sack this guy for the sixteen guys than it is to help one kid at the expense of the other sixteen. I just can't justify that in my own thinking. I'm setting certain standards and then I'm forcing the marginal kid to make a decision that he is either with me, or he is out of the program completely. So I end up with my type of ball player, whatever that might be. (4).

A few coaches were even more rigid than the "autocrat." Their criteria for dismissal were especially blunt. One coach said:

What the coach says goes. I think that kids should either live up to that or get out. . . I don't think a coach should label it as a bad attitude, I think he should probably get rid of him. (9).

Another college coach felt the same way.

I would tend to be impatient with players that have a bad attitude over a period of time. If a player has a bad attitude when I first run into contact with them, then I feel it is my obligation to correct that attitude. If I can't correct it or get it to work into our program, then I think I've got to do something to eliminate it. (8).

Still another college coach gave his reason for dismissing a player and opened up an important consideration. He said:

I think that if a kid's bad attitude is having a bad effect on the other players, that you'll get rid of him, even if he's got all of the ability or not. (4).

What if a coach's most talented player has the worst attitude on the team? He must realize what a decision like dismissing a player who may be his best can do to the team. The coach must bear the responsibility for making that decision. No doubt many coaches play those individuals who have the most talent irregardless of their attitudes because they want to win. One informant discussed this problem:

Well, I think that if a coach is honest, he's got to admit that he's had players on his ball club that have the athletic skill, and they can contribute through that alone to the point that you can win more. You keep them in the line-up, but this doesn't, by the way, excuse you (the coach) from helping that kid with his attitude, even though he's playing. He can still have a bad attitude. (2).

He also discussed what is probably a major consideration that few people realize outside of the coaching profession. That consideration was that performance and talent--not attitude alone--won games. He said,

I think I've seen more times than not, a team with a great attitude lose every ball game. When I worked with the football team (they're a great bunch of kids) I had more respect for them than any team I've ever worked with. They also won one out of 17 games but they never quit. They hustled all the time and they learned to win. And I've seen the other way when a team with a bad attitude--a team with talent--like the pro's--they go out and win all the time. The bad attitude is going to get to them after a while. . . I think you can get away with the bad attitude possibly in certain situations, although again it depends on who your leaders are; if the nucleus of your kids have what you call a good attitude they're going to pull you through. I think that's the key. (3).

Summary

The kind of theoretical or philosophical stand the coach takes on his explanation of the bad attitude is also indicative of his posture

regarding failure and trying, in general. It also affects the ways he manages the bad attitude.

One technique for managing a bad attitude is based on communication so that the players have an understanding of their specific roles on the team. The coaches felt that when a player knows how he can contribute to the team's success (even if it is only in a small way--like as a pinchrunner) then he is less likely to develop a bad attitude. Also communication between coach and player gives the coach a basis for analysis of potential bad attitude problems because the coach has a feeling for what the player desires to achieve on the ball field. Also, coaches who had individual and team meetings where the player's respective roles were outlined usually had fewer bad attitudes because the players became more goal-oriented. That is, they tried harder to improve because the coach had communicated to them the skills necessary to concentrate on for improvement. It seemed that with a lack of communication (no prior meetings between the player and coach) the coach actually had no basis for analyzing a player's attitude.

After a "bad attitude" problem with a player had been analyzed the coaches verbalized three possible solutions to rid the player and/or team of a bad attitude. First, the one on one counselling session was tried in an effort to allow the player a chance to try to change his behavior. Occasionally, this counselling session might follow what might be termed punishment (such as running laps after practice) because some coaches felt that the players were more apt to be completely honest with them after they had been punished. Thus, the counselling session would be more productive. However, this appeared to be the exception rather than the rule.

The second possible solution for managing a bad attitude was to bench the bad attitude player. The benching could last for a short time (as a sanctioning device for part of a game) or a coach could choose to bench the player indefinitely.

The final managing technique was to dismiss the player from the team. Some coaches felt that after other methods for managing a bad attitude had failed, dismissal was certainly appropriate. Most coaches, however, were reluctant to dismiss a player from the team, because as educators, they felt it was their responsibility to channel a player's bad attitude into something positive. Other coaches were reluctant to dismiss a player because they felt that their criteria for determining a bad attitude differed from the players' and was a value judgment at best. Some coaches tried to determine whether or not a player wanted to improve and fit into the program before they dismissed him.

A major implication, as far as the coaches were concerned, was the possible dismissal of a "star" player who had a bad attitude. Should a coach make an exception in the "star's" case or should he treat him like all the other bad attitude players? The implications of these types of questions will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary

Throughout this study we have seen how the coaches' accounts of actual experiences are linked to their descriptions of the bad attitude. The data showed that the bad attitude is a manifestation of intentional, deliberate, withholding-of-performance ability. It is that much of an essential notion. It is anti-American because we, as a society, place so much emphasis on trying in any context. Failure, in our society, is intentionally not trying.

Merton (1957) further made this point when he discussed the success theme in American culture:

The distinctive nature of this cultural doctrine is twofold: first, striving for success is not a matter of individuals happening to have acquisitive impulses, rooted in human nature, but is a socially defined expectation; and second, this patterned expectation is regarded as appropriate for everyone. . .the prevailing cultural orientations assign great emphasis to this form of success and hold it appropriate that all should strive for it.

In the introduction to this study it was stated that a major task was to explore the ways in which a "bad attitude" is used for a variety of purposes by coaches. More precisely the coaches used ideas or concepts that would describe the relationships between the coach and the players on their particular baseball team. Definite and sensitizing concepts (Blumer's terms) were developed in order to characterize bad attitudes by isolating certain key terms employed by baseball coaches in their normal use of the language. Naturally, these characteristics are the

ways that the coaches summarize or typify what has been their experience.

Another task of this study was the conversion of hard core research to theory (called Grounded Theory), a technique not often used by sports sociologists since many only theorize from a personal experience standpoint or from observations. This so-called ethnomethodology or qualitative methodology enabled me to obtain data in a natural and sincere manner from the coaches.

It followed that informant coaches seemed to have seven different ways of classifying their players who had bad attitudes. They were: (a) the alibier, (b) the benchwarmer, (c) the uncoachable player, (d) the selfish player, (e) the immature player, (f) the loafer, and (g) the faker. Each bad attitude type may be characteristically different, for instance, the alibier and the loafer, yet each commonly becomes a threat to the coach's authority, as they see it, and a deterrent to the success of their teams. The data indicated that these types of bad attitudes are manifested behaviors which are detrimental to the team's performance (as the coach perceives it). Furthermore, a close examination of the seven types of bad attitudes indicated that players who exhibit any or all of those characteristics are simply not trying. It seems to me, however, that the entire responsibility for not trying is not solely the player's. The data, however clearly showed that coaches perceived that the players, themselves, should try to change their bad attitudes into something positive.

I discovered how coaches used the glossy language of sport to summarize the performances of their players in an effort to describe the bad attitude and eventually label and place a player into a category. These glossy terms were called Performance Summarizers. Examples

focused on: (a) the circumstances that coaches gave as an explanation for the performance of their team; and (b) the personality traits of individual players as described by the informants.

Typically, players who have a bad attitude may lose more games, may get into more slumps, and consequently, may have a lower self-concept than other players. Also, according to the coaches, players with bad attitudes may lack desire, hustle, and a willingness to "put out," or "pay the price." These players may also lack concentration and leadership qualities that necessarily help the players function as a team. These afore-mentioned qualities are indicators that a player is not trying. The posture that coaches had regarding not trying (and what causes it) satisfactorily predicted the kind of intervention strategy they used to manage the bad attitude.

Many of the coaches generally viewed their responsibility to manage a player out of his bad attitude as important. Other coaches felt that communicating with their players before and during the season helped to prevent a bad attitude. At any rate, there seemed to be an observable, predictable pattern for managing a bad attitude beginning with the communication between the coach and players as to a particular player's role on the squad, itself. It was expressed by the informant coaches that as long as the player was serving a specific function on the team then he would probably not exhibit a bad attitude. However, when a bad attitude was exhibited by a player, the informants pointed to three procedures that were useful in managing those attitudes, (a) communication with the team members, (b) an analysis of the player's attitude, and (c) sanctioning the player by dismissing him from the team.

Many of the coaches were hesitant to dismiss a player from the team because, as educators, they felt a certain responsibility to the athlete to at least (my emphasis) try other coaching techniques with that particular player. Certain criteria regarding improvement potential and more significantly the player's talent and raw ability were taken into consideration before a decision regarding the severity of the sanction was finalized.

Implications for the Coaching Profession

Upon close scrutiny of the data contained in this work a basic premise definitely appears to be the key in successfully preventing a bad attitude: field a winning team. Also, the difference in winning and losing appears to be the common variable in being able to manage a bad attitude. One coach said about losing: "losing tends to magnify every mistake. . . (like) tactical" (strategy used by the coach). (6).

The data indicated that the coach, in many cases, is at the mercy of the available talent. My experiences, as a former coach and present interviewer, tend to support the belief that nearly every team can have a talent shortage. Almost every team may be considered weak in one aspect of the game or another. The data indicated that the bad attitude has been a rationalization on the part of coaches to make themselves (or their teams) competitive in order to deal with a lack of talent. Thus, the bad attitude has served as a function of stereotyping. Furthermore, coaches have a responsibility to bring the available talent to a level of competition and this thing called the bad attitude somehow gets in the way.

In order to determine whether or not a player has a bad attitude a coach has to concentrate a great deal of his time on a player's negative

traits such as alibying, selfishness, immaturity, and uncoachability, as well as his positive attributes, all because he is charged with making or maintaining a winning tradition. The emphasis on winning may cause the coach to spend unnecessary time pampering players (as with the private and exclusive, for players only, locker room and lounge), because as the coaches indicated, bad attitudes are not only more likely to occur, but they also become more visible as a team loses. This visibility causes the real pressure on coaches to win.

According to some coaches, performance summarizers of the bad attitude often point to something inside the player, a psychological trait such as desire, mental toughness, or a willingness to "pay the price." However, other coaches pointed to circumstances such as parental pressure or a slump as being the catalyst for a bad attitude. Consequently, coaching has become as much psychological and emotional motivation as physical practice and the most prevalent pressure on a coach or player is the pressure to win.

In intercollegiate and interscholastic competition winning indicates a one hundred percent use of all of one's capabilities: physical, psychological, and emotional. It means giving it "the old college try." Losing only tends to magnify any negative qualities of a particular player into something that is bad. Continued losing may bring on additional demands by a coach, such as some sort of punishment like running laps or more intense practice sessions. If a player does not perform capably, does not "put out" or "pay the price" -- he is not trying and may be labeled as a player with a bad attitude.

There are other aspects of losing that affect attitudes. For instance, a player may become uncoachable due to the fact that he has lost

faith in the coach's ability to coach. A coach may be very knowledgeable about strategy, technique, and his players may like him, but if the team habitually loses their games their problems of attitude may be magnified out of proportion. Losing consistently, not only may hurt a coach in his players' eyes, but may also cause some players to try too hard. When players try too hard, they can tighten up and go into a hitting or fielding slump and simply compound the problem of a bad attitude.

If a player goes into a slump, the coach may decide to use a player off the bench as a replacement. Naturally, the slumping player may use his new position "on the bench" to exhibit bad attitude characteristics; like badmouthing the coach or the replacement player. As the data indicated, benchwarming gives some players the occasion to do just this. If the bad attitude player is vocal enough and he is able to negatively influence other players then a break down of team morale is possible. Also, if the replacement does poorly or the team loses some more games then the player's bad attitude is reinforced. To deal with this kind of a situation, some of the coaches decided to keep the size of the squad down to thirteen or fourteen players. Of course, this only makes varsity competition more elitist than it already is because there is no room for the marginal player who could, if the opportunity arose, help the team. This type of player is not even allowed to make the squad.

There are many more examples of the ways in which bad attitude characteristics are intertwined with each other. Benchwarmers can influence marginal players by griping or blaming other players because they are not responsive to coaching. Uncoachable players may influence other players to be insubordinate or to not improve themselves in practice. The selfish player who only cares about his own success may not lend himself to

generating the kind of team cooperation that is essential to success.

The data showed a keen amount of similarity among the coaches pertaining to the properties of bad attitudes typified in Chapter Two. If these kinds of typifications are tenaciously held to and transmitted from generation to generation within the coaching sub-culture it should be interesting to be aware of the natural outcomes of this regarding discrimination. Coaches seem to look for a particular type of player to play on their teams. The player should be a leader, who hustles, shows physical talent with great desire, and is willing to "pay the price." Players who do not exhibit these qualities may be "washed out" at the high school or college level.

The other natural outcome of these similarities obviously concerns player selection. It seems apparent from the data that the coaches use attitude as a major criteria to include or exclude members of the team. It seems as if the idea of the bad attitude, as the informants expressed it, is the conceptual manner in which the social organization of the team is held together. This may be particularly apparent when coaches overuse the term. This is an important operational use of the term "bad attitude" because attitude may be as much of a determinant of who plays on the team as talent is. This further generates the grounded theory that a player's attitude either enhances or hurts his value to the team. The characterization of the bad attitude known as the faker bears this out. The coaches who suspected their players of faking a good attitude indicated that faking only took place when the coach was present. Seemingly, a good indication of attitude is what the player does to help the team when the coach is not present. Accordingly, if a player exhibits other characteristics of the bad attitude when the coach is not present it must necessarily

mean that that particular player is not trying.

The bad attitude, according to the data, carries a large stigma against the player particularly if it is considered to be intentional. If the bad attitude is unintentional the stigma is lessened. Coaches seem to be split on their feelings as to the causes of bad attitudes just as Americans are split on the causes of social problems such as alcoholism, for instance. Some conservative Americans would view alcoholism as a personal pathology: "He's just an old, lazy, good-for-nothing drunk," where others might see the problem of alcoholism as a matter of circumstance, a sickness that stays with it's victim indefinitely.

In the same light, conservative coaches are going to write the bad attitude off as a personal pathology (loser, weak, uncoachable, selfish and the like). More liberal coaches seem to view the bad attitude as being a socially determined factor such as parental or peer pressure or even a manifestation to cover up for a lack of talent. In any case a player may be playing baseball when he actually would be happier doing something else.

From the interviews, it can be concluded that coaches felt it is the player's responsibility to change the player's behavior when that player has a bad attitude. This reinforces my observation that coaches view the player with a bad attitude in a negative way. Essentially, a player who has a bad attitude does not have his goals, whatever they may be, in line with the goals set for the team by the coach. To off-set this phenomenon, coaches set the tone for practices and the subsequent style of play that the team exhibits. In setting the tone, however, honesty and a realistic appraisal of each player's talents should be a prerequisite.

The data clearly indicates that the bad attitude can be less of a problem when the player understands what his role on the team is to be. This initial step taken by some coaches in the management of bad attitudes tends to alleviate characteristics of the bad attitude such as the loafer, the alibier, the selfish player, and the uncoachable player. This style of communication appears to be an effective way of informing players what each must do in order to improve his skills and thus become a more valuable member of the team. Implied in any conversation such as this is the feeling that the player is expected to try his best in all phases of the game so that he and eventually the team can be more successful.

When there is lack of this type of communication the coach actually has no basis for analyzing a player's attitude as a step in managing those attitudes. If the player does not know what the coach expects in regards to trying then the coach may be at fault. Players need to know the rules of the game before they play. This style of coaching can be effective, particularly in an educational setting, because it teaches the player that he is ultimately responsible for his own contributions to the team's success. If a player knows he is not contributing to the team effort then a bad attitude is more likely to occur. A player should know how he can contribute to the team's success if bad attitudes are to be eliminated. He should understand what his role on the team is to be. A good example of what can happen when there is no communication is the benchwarmer who sits game after game with no real responsibility, like coaching first base or charting pitches. He may have the opportunity to second-guess the coach and other players. If the team is also losing more games than it is winning, this negative second-guessing may be reinforced and the player can become a chronic bad attitude problem for the coach.

In conclusion, the problems of managing bad attitudes seem to be compounded when the coach is unable to define exactly what the bad attitude is. This study has explored the bad attitude in a way to see in manifestation one of America's most precious values: trying. This data has penetrated America's value system; the player with a bad attitude is a player who does not try.

The problems that arise about managing bad attitudes can be solved if the coach understands the characteristics and the circumstances that bring about the bad attitude in the first place. The coach should solve these problems by evaluating his own coaching philosophy and style so that both he and his team are comfortable, recognizing that there are many different personalities to deal with and that one cannot be effective one hundred percent of the time.

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APPENDIX

1. What are the properties that comprise a bad attitude?
 - A. There must be specific things.
 - B. Why do you mention these characteristics while others are left out?
2. What types of bad attitude are there?
3. Is a player with a bad attitude a problem for you?
4. Are bad attitude players scapegoats for losses?
5. Is losing the end result of having a bad attitude?
6. Are you impatient with players who you feel have a bad attitude?
7. Is thinking that a player has a bad attitude a value judgment on your part?
8. What are some incidences of a bad attitude that are demonstrated on the field?
9. How do you deal with players who you have categorized as having a bad attitude?
 - A. Have you had any success?
10. Is a good attitude as important as having athletic skill?
11. Is a losing attitude the same as a bad attitude?
12. To what degree are coaches responsible for an athlete's attitude?
13. How do you think players develop a bad attitude?
14. Is the attitude of the player related at all to mobility? In other words, does a good attitude give a player the opportunity to play more than a player with a bad attitude?